

June 27, 2013

**National Weather Service Honors Pat and Diane Thelander
for
Outstanding Service to Volunteer Cooperative Weather Observer Program**

Recognizing more than 30 years of dedication, NOAA's National Weather Service has presented Pat and Diane Thelander, Cooperative Weather Observers from rural Oshkosh, Nebraska – with some well-earned awards.

A 30 Year Length-of-Service Award was presented recently to Pat and Diane Thelander, for their exemplary service in the Cooperative Observer Program. In addition to the length-of- service award, the Thelander's were also presented with a Special Service Award – given to recognize them for their significant achievements.

Patrick and Diane Thelander began taking weather observations on June 1st, 1983, from their ranch along the Blue Creek, 10 miles northeast of Oshkosh, Nebraska. Pat is a highly conscientious observer who always calls in his precipitation, snowfall and snow depth totals to the National Weather Service office in North Platte.

Pat Thelander is known for his quite timely reports during inclement weather. Whether he is reporting blizzard conditions during calving season, or out on a hill near his ranch, spotting tornadoes for the National Weather Service and Garden County - his vast knowledge of weather is a huge aid to his friends, family, nearby community and Garden County, Nebraska. He calls us before we even have a chance to pick up the phone, to inquire about the rapidly changing weather conditions near Oshkosh.

Pat Thelander has given these updates to the local radio station and newspaper, so they could disseminate it to the nearby community. He is a kind hearted, caring neighbor, as well as one of the hardest working volunteers you will ever find. He has helped kids in 4H programs with weather training and as a long time storm spotter. Pat has trained many local members of fire departments and emergency management on proper storm spotting techniques. Mr. Thelander attends our spotter talks every single year, and is such a vast resource of local knowledge for his area.

Pat has gone above and beyond the call of duty, not only as a COOP weather observer - but also as a Fire Chief and Fire Official, an ambulance driver, along with his cooperation and work with local emergency management, county and state officials. He is so well respected by all employees in the NWS North Platte office, and is on a first name basis with most. His personality, eagerness, and the friendly nature with which he imparts his information are greatly appreciated. Office staff know that when Pat calls in, his information is accurate and reliable, without question.

He has served on the Lewellen Fire Department as Fire Chief, and been an

officer in that organization. He has also served on the Garden County Sheriff's Posse, the Blue Creek 4H, and the Garden County Agricultural Society.

Pat and his wife Diane operate Blue Creek Feeds, along with his own farming and ranching operation. Pat and his three sons are very active with the Blue Creek Rural Fire District. Pat Thelander served on the District 23 School Board for eight years, has been on the Blue Creek Fire Department for over 30 years, and also served previously as an ambulance driver. Pat Thelander helps to get the Farm and Ranch Show going every year in Oshkosh.

Pat and Diane have dedicated their time since 1983 observing and recording precipitation and snowfall. Pat has had a long term role as a trained storm spotter. Mr. Thelander has provided frequent and very timely information about dangerous storms in his area. His reports of wind, hail and tornado damage have always been accurate, and a huge aid to the local National Weather Service in North Platte. Pat and Diane are known for the quality and timeliness of their reports, day or night, and are considered as some of the National Weather Service North Platte office's finest Cooperative Weather Observers.

"The weather enterprise is thankful for the work cooperative observers have done over the last century," said Ryan Knutsvig, meteorologist in charge of NOAA's North Platte National Weather Service office. "They are a very important part of the weather data collection and analysis process. The work of observers has led to a better understanding of our climate and, ultimately, led to better forecasts and warnings for the country. We cannot thank Pat and Diane Thelander enough, for so many years of service to America."

The National Weather Service's Cooperative Weather Observer Program is a unique partnership between the National Weather Service and citizen volunteers in every U.S. state and territory. The cooperative observer program has given scientists and researchers continuous weather data since the program's inception in 1890. Today, more than 11,000 volunteer observers participate in the nationwide program to provide daily reports on temperature, precipitation and other weather factors such as snow depth, river levels and soil temperature.

Long and continuous records provide an accurate picture of a locale's normal weather, and give climatologists and others a basis for predicting future trends. These data are invaluable for scientists studying floods, droughts and heat and cold waves. At the end of each month, observers mail their records to the National Climatic Data Center for publication in "Climatological Data" or "Hourly Precipitation Data."

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On the Web:

NOAA's National Weather Service, North Platte: <http://www.weather.gov/lbf>